

John 6:16-21 Sermon-Based Discussion Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To help us understand both God's purposes and God's promises for us as we go through the storms of life. To help us become a small group that better comes alongside each other through those storms.

Sermon Refresher:

- Jesus sends us into storms for a purpose.
- Jesus gets in the boat with us. He comes to us to be with us in our storms.
- The one in the boat with us is the one who is in control of all things.
- The one in the boat with us is never going to leave us.
- When other people go through storms, sometimes the best thing we can do is get in the boat with them.

Icebreaker: It's the start of a new year and a new semester. What are some things that you are looking forward to this year?

Transition: As we think about a new year, there are things to look forward to, but there is also a certain amount of uncertainty that goes along with that.

Discussion

1. As you think about your upcoming year, what are some things you are more uncertain and maybe even nervous about or dreading?
 - Note to leader: if people share pretty serious concerns here, please remind them that you will take time to pray for these things after the discussion.
2. In the sermon, we looked mostly at John 6:16-21. For our discussion, let's read instead the parallel account in Mark 6:45-52 out loud.
3. Clearly Jesus sent them out purposefully into this storm. What could be some of the reasons Jesus did this? (feel free to draw from the passage or sermon)

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- Possible answers: to stretch and grow their faith, to help them learn to rely on God, to bring them to the end of themselves, to show them they cannot do life without God, etc.

Digging deeper (optional): Let's look up James 1:2-4 and 2 Corinthians 1:8-9.

According to these passages, what are some reasons Jesus sends us into storms?

4. Jesus walking on the water, calming the storm, and landing immediately on the land are all miracles/signs that help us better understanding who Jesus is. Let's look at a couple of Old Testament passages that help us understand what Mark is doing here.

- Read Job 9:8 out loud. When Mark wrote that "Jesus passed by," he used the exact phrase here in Job 9:8 for "trampled the waves of the sea." What is Mark trying to get his reader to understand?

- Possible answers: Mark wants us to see that Jesus' actions here are an implicit claim to be God. Only God can walk on the waters. If Jesus is God, then he controls all things.

- Read Psalm 107:23-31 out loud. It seems that both Mark and John were alluding to this passage when they wrote their account. What is it that they want us to understand about Jesus?

- Possible answers: Again the gospel writers want us to see that Jesus is God, the very God of the Old Testament who created all that is and controls all things. This God is not only fully able to deliver us through the storms of life (literal and figurative), but He will never leave us because of his "steadfast love" (v.31).

5. As you think through this story and this sermon, what truths do you most need to remember when you go through storms?

6. In the sermon, Keith said that when people go through storms, sometimes the most helpful thing we can do is get in the boat with them. Let's watch this short video "The Power of Empathy" (<https://vimeo.com/81492863>) by Dr. Brene' Brown (you'll easily find it on Google under that title).

- What stuck out to you from the video?

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- What are some ways we sometimes inadvertently don't show empathy so well?
- What are some things we could do to better show empathy to others?

Sharing and Prayer Time idea:

- What kinds of storms are you are going through right now?
- When we go through storms, we all tend to pray that God would stop the storms as quickly as possible. Let's read through James 1:2-4 together and instead of praying the usual, that God will stop our storm, let's pray that God would accomplish his purposes in our storm. Let's pray that we would be receptive to what God is doing through the storm.

Leader Notes

1. Mark 6:48 – "He meant to pass them by." On first glance, this might seem to say that Jesus was going to walk right by them without stopping to help, but this is not what is meant at all. It means that Jesus passed by them so that they would all see him walking on the water, giving visible evidence of his deity. This is a very purposeful action by Jesus, and Mark very purposefully includes it in his account. By using this specific phrase, Mark was most likely alluding to Job 9:8 which refers to God "walking on the sea." Thus, this is an implicit claim to the divinity of Jesus.
2. John 6:19 – "When they had rowed about three or four miles." "If the feeding took place at the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, the shortest distance to Capernaum would be 5-6 miles" (ESV Study Bible) across the lake. This puts them close to the middle of the lake.
3. John 6:21 – "and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going." This is a lesser known miracle and is an instance of what is taught in Psalm 107:29-30.